

CROSS COUNTRY CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

November 2006

- *Registered*
- *Certified Level I*
- *Certified Level II*
- *Certified Level III*

The following are the current (2006) PSIA Education/Certification Standards. Referenced to PSIA-AASI's *Core Concepts* (2001), PSIA's *Alpine Technical Manual* (2002) and PSIA's *Nordic Technical Manual* (2005), terminology consistent with these manuals is used throughout this document. These standards provide a training focus, and represent a minimum competency for each level of certification.

The premise of the certification standards is based upon the concepts of "levels of understanding" which define stages of learning in degrees of understanding. As certification is a measure of understanding, levels of certification represent stages of understanding. Candidates will be held to the knowledge and performance standards of the level at which they are testing as well as the criteria for all preceding levels.

REGISTERED (Educational outline for use by home school or for divisional training)

Registered instructor is PSIA's entry level of membership, designed to provide an educational introduction to ski teaching. The Registered level event is conducted according to divisional criteria, and is not a level of certification recognized nationally by PSIA. Therefore, the criteria for Registered level instructors within the National Standards serves only as a guideline for establishing divisional education criteria which prepares Registered level instructors to meet future levels of certification according to the nationally recognized standards for Levels I, II, and III.

Category A: PSIA-AASI Education

General PSIA-AASI education provides teachers with an overview of snowsports instruction, a brief history of PSIA-AASI, and an introduction to the professional aspect of teaching snowsports. Registered members will be expected to recall and comprehend basic information about the aspects of ski teaching and the ski industry listed below.

The instructor will be able to ...

1. Introduction to PSIA-AASI

- a. Recall the history, purpose, and organization of PSIA-AASI
- b. Identify the vision/mission statement of PSIA-AASI

2. Ski Industry

- a. Discuss the role of ski instruction within the snowsports industry
- b. Describe the organization of one's home area
- c. Discuss the teamwork aspect of home area operations

3. Professionalism

- a. Discuss the basic principles and philosophies of professionalism
- b. Discuss specific behaviors of ski instructor professionalism and demonstrate professionalism at home area

Category B: Skiing

Registered level teachers must demonstrate the ability to ski safely terrain common to the Beginner/Novice zone, and to demonstrate consistently the fundamental elements of stance and balance in a form that will create understanding and encourage further development. No specific parameters are set for the performance of any maneuvers until Level I certification. (The term "balance" in the following descriptions references appropriate flex in the joints to keep hips over feet; proper hand and arm position; forward vision; and basic movements that facilitate fore-aft and lateral balance)

The instructor will be able to demonstrate the following in either Classic or Skate technique

1. A balanced athletic body position
2. Balance while gliding on one ski

3. Propulsion without poles
4. Propulsion with poling only
5. Ski a wedge maneuver to control speed
6. Coordinated, skating or striding representative of new skiers

Category C: Core Concept Education

Core Concept education for Registered teachers explores the personal motivation for teaching, and promotes a teaching style/learning environment guided by emotional involvement. Registered level teachers must demonstrate understanding of risk management and safe class handling with Beginner/Novice zone students. Registered instructors have an awareness of basic physical, mental, and social characteristics of students, especially as related to teaching children.

The instructor will be able to...

1. Core ideals

- a. Describe their personal motivation for becoming a snowsports teacher
- b. Describe their own strengths and weaknesses relative to the communication and people skills required to effectively teach snowsports

2. Understanding students

- a. Demonstrate an awareness of physical, cognitive, and affective development in a variety of student populations
- b. Demonstrate an awareness of physical, cognitive, and affective development in children

3. Class Handling and Organization

- a. Recognize the impact and importance of developing trust in the learning environment
- b. Manage risks present in the winter environment in a responsible manner
- c. Demonstrate an ability to provide individual attention to students in a class
- d. Provide a Beginner/Novice zone lesson format based on the guidelines of the American Teaching System (ATS) and one's home area

4. Risk Management

- a. Recite the skier's responsibility code and other safety protocols for the area where you are skiing.
- b. Practice class handling that demonstrates appropriate decision-making based upon risk management principles

5. Customer Service

- a. Identify key elements of a student-centered and experience-oriented approach to teaching
- b. Relate various customer services at one's home resort to ski school students
- c. Demonstrate customer-oriented behaviors that create relationships with guests and students

Category D: Nordic Technical Education

The level of proficiency required of Registered level teachers is defined by a general awareness of basic technical issues, and an ability to demonstrate typical movements and tasks of Beginner/Novice zone skiing.

The instructor will be able to...

1. Skills Concept

- a. Identify and define the six categories of skills

2. Phases of movement

- a. Identify the phases of a skate or stride
- b. Identify dominant movements and skill areas during a skate or stride typical of a student in the Beginner zone

3. Equipment

- a. Characterize the type of rental equipment most often seen in your local area.
- b. Describe proper fit of boots, ways to check the fit of students' boots, and methods of adjustment in fit
- c. Describe proper ski lengths for Beginner/Novice zone students
- d. List required clothing and safety items

4. Movement Analysis

- a. Recognize basic aspects of proper body position and sliding balance
- b. List activities which highlight specific movements relative to chosen categories of the skills concept

5. Stepping Stones

- a. Identify the basic principle of the *stepping stones*
- b. Describe the teaching progression commonly used in your program, club or home ski area for teaching first-time skiers.

Cross Country Track Skiing Standards

● **Level I**

Beginner Zone

The candidate is able to...

■ **Level II**

Intermediate Zone

The candidate is able to...

◆ **Level III**

Advanced Zone

The candidate is able to...

| | ● Level I Beginner Zone <i>The candidate is able to...</i> | ■ Level II Intermediate Zone <i>The candidate is able to...</i> | ◆ Level III Advanced Zone <i>The candidate is able to...</i> |
|----------------------|--|---|---|
| Body Position | Ski with the core over the base of support seen by shin angle appropriate to torso | Ski with the core over the base of support seen by shin angle matching torso | Ski with the core in front of the base of support seen by shin angle matching torso |
| | Balance and glide on one ski | Vary the duration of balance and glide on one ski | Actively balance and glide on one ski for any duration |
| | Ski with a naturally rounded back in an athletic stance | Ski with naturally rounded back and tail tucked under most of the time | Ski with naturally rounded back and tail consistently tucked under |
| | Ski with a stable 'panel' (torso) oriented in the direction of travel in one of the three: twisting, tilting, hinging at the waist | Ski with a stable panel in two of the three: twisting, tilting, hinging at the waist | Ski with a stable panel controlling twisting, tilting, and hinging at the waist |
| Timing | Demonstrate 3 techniques to get around and recognize all of the techniques | Demonstrate all of the techniques and switch techniques and tempo with terrain changes | Demonstrate all of the techniques and switch techniques and tempo seamlessly with terrain changes |
| | Time core, poling and leg movements for the terrain and technique | Time core, poling and leg movements to enhance forward motion | Time core, poling and leg movements precisely to enhance forward motion appropriate to technique and terrain |
| | CL Transfer weight completely SK Transfer weight completely (laterally) | CL Transfer weight as the feet pass SK Transfer weight actively from whole foot to whole foot | CL Transfer weight after the feet pass SK Transfer weight precisely and powerfully from whole foot to whole foot with full extension |
| Propulsion | CL Compress the ski with body weight to create grip SK Engage the ski edge with body movement to create purchase | CL Compress the ski with flexion and extension to create grip SK Push off of the ski edge with extension to create purchase | CL Compress the ski with flexion and extension to create grip and enhance power SK Push off of the ski edge with extension to create purchase and increase glide |
| | CL Pendulum the leg forward Demonstrate flexion/extension | CL Actively pendulum the leg to enhance forward motion Demonstrate flexion and extension dictated by terrain | CL Powerfully pendulum the leg to enhance forward motion and compression Use full range of flexion and extension movements as dictated by terrain to generate power |
| | Engage poles then core muscles | Engage core muscles as poles engage | Engage core muscles as poles engage |
| | Demonstrate propulsion from poling with pole release and arm extension | Demonstrate propulsion from poling with pole release, arm extension and retrieval appropriate to terrain and technique | Increase propulsion by pole push and pole retrieval |

Cross Country Certification Teaching Standards 2005

● Level I - Beginner Zone

The candidate is able to...

■ Level II – Inter-mediate Zone

The candidate is able to...

◆ Level III - Advanced Zone

The candidate is able to...

Awareness, Understanding and Knowledge

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand the coach/student relationship and how to develop trust between them ● Recall the components of the learning environment and discuss how to incorporate them into lessons that will create memorable experiences ● Identify the components of good teaching ● Categorize teaching, skiing, and guest service principles of ATS, relative to Beginner/Novice zone students ● Understand student needs of specific groups (i.e., adults, children, women, seniors, beginners, etc.) ● List considerations for managing the learning environment for children at different stages of development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consider and address safety concerns as students move beyond the Beginner/Novice zone learning environment ■ Understand and identify the components of the learning process, and relate these concepts to individual learning styles and preferences ■ Understand the importance of options in lesson plans based upon the mental, emotional, and physical needs (development) of individual students ■ Illustrate the components of effective feedback in the learning environment ■ Accurately distinguish “What is happening?” with regard to movement analysis ■ Formulate lesson plan options for a variety of student needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consider safety concerns as students move beyond the Intermediate zone learning environment ◆ Make specific lesson plan decisions based upon accurate interpretation of student behavior and performance ◆ Adjust the depth and pacing of information and feedback to address the needs, motivation, and interest level of the students ◆ Address a variety of learning styles and utilize various feedback systems to facilitate an experiential learning environment ◆ Identify the elements of multiple intelligence theory and relate these concepts to sensory preferences in communication and information exchange ◆ Describe, in depth, the skier services and activities available at one’s home area as well as within the ski industry ◆ Display a strong ability to answer the “How do I get there?” question regarding movement analysis ◆ Display an in-depth understanding of cause-and-effect relationships relative to skill references and specific movement issues ◆ Create unique lesson plans through a strong understanding of people and ski technique |
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| <p>● Level I - Beginner Zone The candidate is able to...</p> | <p>■ Level II - Inter-mediate Zone The candidate is able to...</p> | <p>◆ Level III - Advanced Zone The candidate is able to...</p> |
|--|---|--|
| <i>Application</i> | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teach the public through the Beginner/Novice zone ● Demonstrate an ability to develop a relationship of trust between teacher and students ● Identify learning styles and preferences and cite examples of how to use them in a lesson ● Recognize the <i>stepping stones</i> concept and other and identify a pathway to learning based on the needs of students specific to the instructors home area ● Handle a class based on group energy level, conditions, safety, and lesson content ● Predict and meet the needs of specific groups (i.e., children, seniors, men) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teach the skiing public through the Intermediate zone ■ Identify the personality traits and learning preferences of students, and make broad adjustments in lesson plans and delivery to accommodate those traits/preferences ■ Work with ranges of student performance and personalities within a group; maintain group cohesiveness and a personal, emotional attachment with students and the learning environment ■ Make technical lesson content decisions based upon both movement analysis observations and student desires and needs; applying the <i>stepping stones</i> concept beyond the Beginner/Novice zone ■ Demonstrate an effective balance between the amount of information and the amount of practice time; display an effective use of teaching activities ■ Develop accurate lesson plan options that tailor lesson situations to individual needs and goals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teach the skiing public through the Advanced zone ◆ Account for the mental, emotional, social, and physical cues encountered with students in most lesson situations ◆ Creatively utilize the conditions of the day to ensure safety and create unique experiences for students ◆ Make technical lesson content decisions based upon specific movement analysis observations, as well as non-movement factors (mental, emotional, physical) ◆ Demonstrate an ability to encourage students to become responsible for their own learning ◆ Lessons are characterized by a continuously developing lesson plan based on observations and the development and adjustment of guest goals; rather than a preconceived lesson plan based upon initial perceptions |

Nordic Track Certification Professional Knowledge Standards 2005

● Level I - Beginner Zone

The candidate is able to...

■ Level II – Inter-mediate Zone

The candidate is able to...

◆ Level III - Advanced Zone

The candidate is able to...

Terminology

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define and explain basic skiing terminology as described in the <i>Nordic Technical Manual</i> ● Define and explain basic terminology as described in the <i>Core Concepts Manual</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Define and understand terminology as described in the <i>Nordic Technical Manual</i> ■ Relate skiing terminology to students in simple language; communicating <i>what, why, and how</i> the terms and concepts apply to individual students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Demonstrate a strong understanding of industry wide terminology ◆ Display an ability to compare and contrast various types of information regarding skiing and ski teaching from a variety of resources ◆ Demonstrate the ability to translate most skiing terminology into layman’s terms |
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Equipment

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify equipment needs for skiers through the Beginner/Novice zone ● Categorize the basic options and benefits of modern ski designs ● Identify common equipment safety issues ● Understand the basic principles of waxing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Describe changing equipment needs as students move through the Beginner/Novice zone and Intermediate ability zones ■ Understand the options, solutions, and benefits modern designs provide; provide general equipment selection guidance ■ Understand and convey the intended benefits of equipment design ■ Wax for effective grip or glide | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Describe changing equipment needs as skiers move through the Intermediate and Advanced ability zones ◆ Tailor lesson plans to fit student equipment capabilities, ◆ Serve as an industry ambassador, shop liaison, and general authority for equipment questions and advice ◆ Wax effectively for all conditions |
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Skills Concept

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discuss the role of balance relative to the other skill categories and movements especially body position. ● Identify effective movements and skill development through the Beginner/Novice zone ● Understand the concept of skill blending, and identify how different skill blends create different outcomes regarding ski performance for a Beginner/Novice zone skier ● Teach a traditional skill blend for Beginner/Novice zone skiers ● Create an activity list for each skill category | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understand the connections between movements and skills, and how changes in movements affect the blending of skills ■ Understand the application of the <i>skills concept</i> to ski performance and of movement patterns to ski-snow interaction ■ Understand how various skill blends are applied to specific Intermediate zone skiing situations relative to terrain, conditions, and desired student outcome ■ Utilize specific activities to target specific skill development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Incorporate appropriate application of the skills concept as a tool to communicate, organize and assist the teaching of movements ◆ Incorporate and utilize the controlling elements of skiing movements (duration, intensity, rate, and timing) relative to skill blending ◆ Apply skill blending to tactical choices in a variety of conditions |
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Cross Country Certification Professional Knowledge Standards 2005

● Level I - Beginner Zone

The candidate is able to...

■ Level II – Inter-mediate Zone

The candidate is able to...

◆ Level III - Advanced Zone

The candidate is able to...

Movement Analysis

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize general movement patterns relative to skill categories in Beginner/Novice zone skiers ● Identify desired skill and movement outcomes in various types of Beginner/Novice zone skiing including beginner classic, skate and cross country downhill progressions ● List exercises and tasks that address a student’s needs, the equipment being used, terrain options, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Describe the forces skiers use for propulsion; relate how a skier uses muscular effort and movements to generate these forces ■ Understand the <i>visual cues of effective classic and skate skiing</i> relative to Intermediate zone applications ■ Understand cause-and-effect relationships between movements and resultant ski performance in Intermediate zone skiing situations ■ Consider non-performance factors such as age, past experience, conditioning etc., when analyzing the ability of students ■ Communicate movement analysis information and prescriptions for change to students in simple, positive language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Incorporate all aspects of student-teacher communication as a part of movement analysis, utilizing personality traits such as motivation and emotion in addition to actual skiing performance ◆ Incorporate the <i>visual cues of effective classic and skate skiing</i> relative to Advanced zone skiing applications ◆ Incorporate and cause-and-effect relationships and resultant ski performance in Advanced zone skiing situations ◆ Utilize informal movement analysis (in addition to formal situations) to constantly monitor all aspects of movement and movement patterns as an ongoing process throughout a lesson ◆ Evaluate the effectiveness and performance of practice activities, and continuously adjust lesson plans accordingly |
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Personal Mastery

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and develop a vision for personal growth as a snowsports teacher ● Understand the pathways for personal and professional growth by identifying the resources available both inside and outside of PSIA-AASI ● Plan short- and long-range schedules for training and certification goals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Include resort-wide interests in all lesson situations, addressing student needs beyond learning to ski ■ Demonstrate an ability to handle internal and external conflict resolution ■ Demonstrate an ability to interact in resort areas outside of the lesson environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Seek outside education options to promote a broad understanding of the sport ◆ Seek involvement in helping less experienced teachers |
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CERTIFIED LEVEL I

Certified Level I members demonstrate a solid foundation of information and training necessary to be an effective ski teacher for beginner and novice skiers. The Certified Level I instructor possesses an understanding of *basic* skiing skills, teaching skills, and professional knowledge. It is not expected that Level I candidates will have *in-depth* knowledge and experience in each of the areas of competence listed in these Standards. It is expected, however, that candidates will be able to show *basic* competence and knowledge in all of these areas. In addition, it is expected that candidates will be able to demonstrate a *significant* level of competency with the skiing and teaching tasks listed specifically for assessment at a Level I event.

Category A: Skiing

Level I certified teachers must be able to ski all green and groomed blue terrain demonstrating consistent balance, coordination and control of speed. Demonstrations must display an “understandable picture” of the technical elements of Beginner/Novice zone skiing. Skiing dynamics are limited by the speeds and terrain appropriate for Beginner/Novice zone skiing and tasks.

1. Matrix for Nordic Certification Standards, p. 3.

Describes specific skills at Level I

Category B: Teaching

Level I Certified teachers demonstrate a solid foundation of information, and experience necessary to be an effective teacher of Beginner/Novice zone skiers. A basic understanding of how to manage the learning environment for different age and gender situations is required.

Please see the **Matrix for Nordic Track Certification Teaching Standards, p. 4-5.**

Describes specific skills at Level I

Category C: Professional Knowledge

Professional knowledge requirements for Level I Certified teachers reflect a practical awareness of general terms and concepts, and an ability to use these concepts in basic lesson situations for Beginner/Novice zone students. Decision making and lesson content will most likely follow preplanned options, with consideration for different skill development emphasis.

Please see the **Matrix for Nordic Track Certification Professional Knowledge Standards, p. 6-7.**

Describes specific skills at Level I

CERTIFIED LEVEL II

The Level II certified member is one who has demonstrated commitment and dedication to the ski teaching profession and to his/her own personal development. Level II members are considered qualified to provide valuable instruction to a majority of ski school guests. A Level II certified instructor demonstrates the ability to relate movements and skill areas to movement outcomes and to apply that knowledge to teaching situations common to Intermediate zone skiers. Level II certified instructors have a global understanding of the ski industry and are able to classify their responsibilities as a part of the resort team.

Category A: Skiing

Level II certified teachers have the skills to stride and skate on blue and groomed black terrain with moderate efficiency. Skis grip (classic) or edge (skate) with minimal slip, effecting a timely weight transfer and lengthened glide. Skill application and accuracy may vary with terrain and snow conditions. Demonstrations should illustrate accurate movement patterns and reflect skiing dynamics relative to the speeds and tempos common to Intermediate zone skiers.

1. Matrix for Nordic Certification Skiing Standards, p. 3.

Describes specific skills at Level II

Category B: Teaching

Level II certified teachers demonstrate an understanding of basic learning theory, communication and people skills, and human development. Practical knowledge of these concepts is required for students and teaching situations through Intermediate zone lessons. Level II certified teachers demonstrate the ability to adapt the lesson environment to meet a variety of options for specific audiences (i.e., age, gender).

Please see the **Matrix for Nordic Track Certification Teaching Standards, p. 4-5.**

Describes specific skills at Level II

Category C: Professional Knowledge

Professional Knowledge for Level II certified teachers reflects a basic understanding of general terms and concepts applicable through the Intermediate zone. Application of teaching concepts in actual lesson situations should reveal an ability to interpret correctly student behavior and performance, and to deliver technical content through relevant activities and simple language.

Please see the **Matrix for Nordic Track Certification Professional Knowledge Standards, p. 6-7.**

Describes specific skills at Level II

CERTIFIED LEVEL III

The Certified Level III member is one whose high levels of skill and knowledge allow him or her to make an uncompromised contribution to the customer, the Association, and the ski industry. A Level III Certified member has the ability to assess all variables with regard to student personality traits, goals, abilities, needs, the learning environment, conditions of the day, available terrain, equipment, etc. and to synthesize these parts into a viable lesson plan. A Level III instructor can make adjustments to lesson goals and is able to appropriately adjust or modify lesson content as required by any situation.

Category A: Skiing

Level III certified teachers have the skills to stride and skate on blue and groomed black terrain with optimal efficiency. Skis grip (classic) or edge (skate) with little or no slip, effecting a timely weight transfer and maximum glide. Terrain and snow conditions should have minimal impact on skill application and movement accuracy. Demonstrations should illustrate accurate movement patterns and reflect skiing dynamics relative to the speeds and tempos common to Intermediate zone skiers. A Level III certified teacher has the ability to maintain dynamics and movement accuracy through most conditions, on any terrain on most trail systems.

1. Matrix for Nordic Certification Skiing Standards, p. 3.

Describes specific skills at Level III

Category B: Teaching

Level III certified teachers must demonstrate an in depth understanding of basic learning theory, communication and people skills, and human development issues. Display a mastery of human development issues for all skiing populations (i.e., age, gender). Application of these concepts must produce a clear and concise delivery of information, and an uncomplicated learning environment through Advanced zone lessons.

Please see the **Matrix for Nordic Track Certification Teaching Standards, p. 4-5.**

Describes specific skills at Level III

Category C: Professional Knowledge

Professional Knowledge for Level III certified teachers reflects a strong accurate understanding of skiing terminology and concepts beyond the scope of ski teaching manuals. Related industry sources, ski coaching, and familiarity with various peripheral resources promote well-rounded teaching with the capacity to create exceptional experiences for most students, in most conditions on any terrain at most ski areas.

Please see the **Matrix for Nordic Track Certification Professional Knowledge Standards, p. 6-7.**

Describes specific skills at Level III